

Sweet Chickpea Flour Pudding

with Almonds

SERVES 6

PREP & COOKING TIME

35 minutes with almonds
(or 25 minutes without)

1½ oz (36) raw
almonds (optional)

½ cup unsalted butter

¾ cup chickpea flour

5 cups milk (whole or 2%)

1 cup demerara sugar
or Indian raw sugar

THIS pudding—minus the almonds—is Shanik and Meeru’s favourite after-school snack or “Indian dessert.” Although we’re not sure about the origins of this pudding, which is usually eaten for breakfast almost like oatmeal, it must be a rustic peasant food, as we have never seen it served to guests or even outside of anyone’s home. We tend to forget how much butter and sugar go into this sweet dish because we focus on the chickpea flour and milk. Chickpea flour is high in protein, iron and fibre and is very healthy, and milk is obviously of great value to the Indian diet.

This pudding is basically like making a béchamel sauce. Stirring with a whisk is crucial to the outcome, so be sure to have one handy when you make this pudding. As well, the higher the quality of the sugar you use, the better this dessert will taste. We’ve used raw Indian sugar, date sugar and demerara sugar, but you can use plain white sugar if that’s all you have.

We add six roasted almonds per serving, but if you’re an almond lover, add as many of the nuts as you like. You can mix them into the pudding or sprinkle them on top. Just remember that if you double the number of almonds, you may need to add an extra tablespoon of sugar to the pudding. If you don’t like almonds, eat this pudding on its own.

Note that, like other milk-based puddings, this one will form a thin skin on top as it cools. Simply stir the pudding with a whisk and reheat it before serving any leftovers.

Place almonds in a small, heavy-bottomed frying pan over medium heat. Stir regularly and cook for 2 minutes. You may get a few small black patches on some of the almonds; that’s fine, you won’t taste them. Turn off the heat and spread almonds on a plate to cool for 10 to 15 minutes.

While almonds are cooling, make the pudding. In a medium pot, melt butter on low heat. Add chickpea flour, stir well with a whisk and increase the heat to medium. Keep stirring, completely blending the flour into the butter. Cook, stirring regularly, for 8 to 10 minutes, or until the flour darkens. (This means the chickpea flour is completely cooked.)

Keeping your head away from the pot, gently pour in milk. (The milk will sizzle when it first touches the hot batter.) Stir well with the whisk. Stir in sugar, bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to low. Cook for 10 minutes while stirring regularly with a whisk. Turn off the heat.

Roughly chop the almonds and sprinkle over the pudding.